



## Change Training

**Training & Development departments have a tough life: small budget, high expectations.**



**In more recent days, training & development may even be embedded in the more fashionable department called “Talent Management”.**

**The list of offered courses, seminars and workshops is long. It usually starts with on-boarding workshops, covers Finance for Non-Finance employees, and reaches as far as outplacement.**

**Training & Development initiatives constantly hover above any employee, ready to enrich his or her professional life and CV.**

A major open question was recently expressed by a head of T&D in a global biotech company: *“We are investing so much in training, but I*

*cannot see many things change!”*

She was talking especially about marketing, sales and field forces, like Key Account Management, specialty reps, medical liaison managers and market access people.

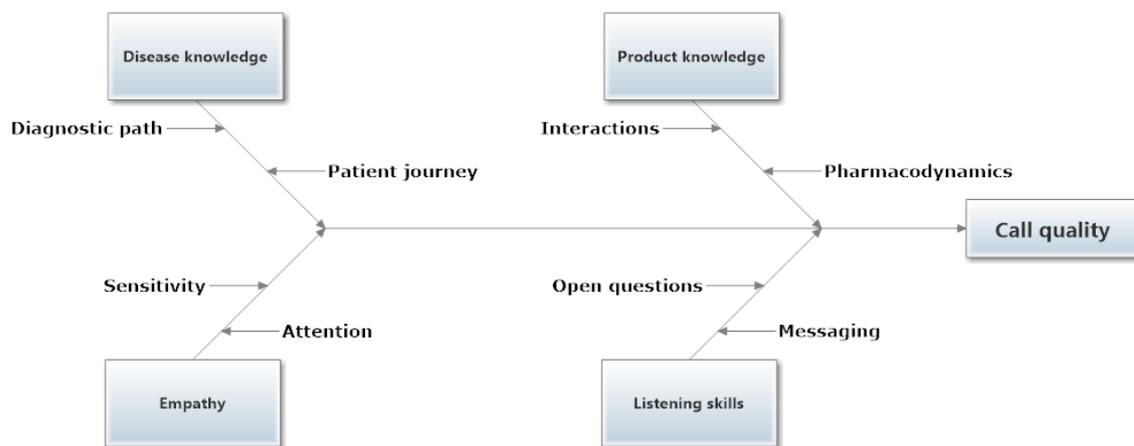
Looking a bit deeper into the subject, a number of aspects and questions come to the fore waiting to be addressed. There are four central questions.

### Why train?

The objective why people should be trained seems evident: they need to improve. Yet the driver to invest and send someone to a training must lie in a clearly analysed and well understood business need. Only then everyone involved will have a clear idea what must be improved and to which degree. As in real life, a professional diagnosis must come before any “therapy” is started.

To set up such a diagnostic pathway there are plenty of tools. One of my favourite tools starting an assessment is the online questionnaire. Very similar to a physician assessing a patient’s problem, the wording of questions can be an art. The selection of the various ways to answers is essential as well. Answering patterns reach from full text over multiple choice to clicking buttons in a value matrix. Online surveys are essential, and very helpful when it comes to a bigger number of people, like in a field force or a total company population.

Thinking about specific subjects or assumed gaps in smaller groups of people, a *cause & effect-analysis* may be very helpful indeed. It takes time and effort, a culture of openness and individual involvement.



At the end one must be very clear about the question: “Which is the objective of the training?” or “Why should we invite people to a training?”

One possible objective can be “learning.” Although we tend to assume that in many cases in business *learning* will only be a beneficial side-effect of training. In general, training, as an initiative to address a business issue, needs to initiate change: participants should change the way they act in their professional tasks and surrounding. In an ideal situation, participants should act differently after a training than before, shouldn’t they?

Measuring the performance of trainers and the training department is not too difficult. Repeating the initial diagnostic assessment about the “Why train?” will automatically lead to measurability of the training: It will show the intended difference between “before” and “after”. The repetition of the diagnosis is the pathway to find out, if a training was successful and met the intended endpoints.

**Any training & development initiative must have its grounds and justification in a specific, clear and “fully diagnosed” business issue to be addressed and solved by training.**

### Who to train?

Peter Drucker once defined effectiveness as “*doing the right thing*” and efficiency he said, was “*to do things right*”.

“Our sales force does not perform well enough!” often leads to an RFP, requesting a proposal from an external vendor to come up with a proposal for “The High Performance Sales Team” covering all x-hundred reps. This procedure is fine, when and if you are measured against your “spend” of the training budget. Running training initiatives this way neither is effective nor will training show a decent degree of efficiency.

A more appropriate starting point will be to run a set of analytics, to identify those who need training from a business perspective. This will contribute to a wise investment in your people and the business, showing a clear return.

The crucial question is: “*Who needs to be empowered or moved to act differently on which subject and in which situation?*” may be such a question. In any case, the question must be fully related and mirror the previously identified business issue.

If there are first line managers, you might want to leave the assessment to them, but you should never leave them alone. They need a structured approach, a questionnaire and boxes to tick, if it should be them to find out who to train. If handled otherwise you hardly will achieve the intended correction of the business issue to improve the performance of your business.

**A training & development initiative must identify its participants following individual assessments instead of a “one size fits all approach.**

### How to train?

Answers to the first two questions about the *Why* and *Who* will deliver guidance towards the appropriate *How*. This *How* consists of striving and designing an appropriate training methodology.

It is important to make one point clear: (*e-*)*learning* does not contain the word training. It is about “learning”. We all remember this from our school days, when ex-cathedra-teaching was a central starting point of our learning. A next step of learning is repetition. The final step is the examination of what has been memorized / learned. And the person standing in front is a teacher, not a trainer.

Training and methodologies to be applied are different from teaching and vary by purpose.

1. The major purpose of training is to empower people to better move from A to B by improved insight and understanding.
2. Moving in a different / improved way needs change.
3. Moving from A to B is an individual’s decision needing explicit action.

Any training professional, will be happy to indicate or show his or her variations of methods to achieve these requirements and standards. Assessing and judging on the value of training methods depends on the business issue to be solved and the people attending. Yet there is one common denominator: any kind of training, no matter how it is executed, has to result in change: change of insight, change of perception, change of habits and different behaviours. After a training a person, take yourself as an example, needs to perceive the covered matter in a new way and act differently.

The spectrum of “how to” might lead you into aspects of self-reflection, parts of coaching, repetition, example, role-modelling, peer-reviews and probably indicate group-work, key-

notes, “intellectual arson”, meta-plan work, presentations, exercises, creative techniques involving artists and actors, and so on.

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*After any training perception and behaviour must differ from before.*

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**A training & development initiative must leverage a methodology driving a change of mind-set, habits and behaviour into the intended direction.**

### **What to train?**

Changing behaviours or habits is possible after below three details are accomplished:

1. Dissemination of a clear insight into the status quo.
2. Giving a clear direction by sharing the intended outcome.
3. Establishing a “sense of urgency” to drive the change of behaviours.

The first step conveying insight, can have a lot to do with “learning” in its true and narrow sense. Participants may have to learn differences between past and future or getting clear about the glass being half full or half empty. All these novel and game-changing legal compliance rules may serve as good examples.

A training initiative usually is designed to solve a problem in or of the business. To ensure success of the initiative, all(!) involved must fully know what the planned outcome is and what they need to contribute to achieve the intended outcome individually. After they have learned about the status quo, the objective must be conveyed and understood.

If you check yourself for your own readiness to change habits, you will understand, that no slide deck and no speaker’s charisma will make you change substantially. How often have you been told by your parents, friends, mentors and others “Don’t!” but you did. How often did you, as a parent, tell and urge your off-spring “Don’t!” and still they “did it”.

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### *What is it that really drives change?*

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Training should be designed and developed to solve a business problem. Once a problem exists, it evidently can be solved by different, changed patterns of behaviour. If this happens this is what you rightfully call “change”. But there is no change without an individual reason why.

The Art of Training lies exactly here: creating a sustainable sense of urgency and the inherent wish to change habits and behaviours.

**A training & development initiative must contain a method, a tool and a moment when a sense of urgency is triggered in an individual causing the change of habits and behaviour.**